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University of Denver Institute for Digital Humanities: Final Report
Digital Humanities in the Era of Networks

I. Introduction: The Changing Nature of Digital Humanities

At a recent Modern Language Association convention, Cathy Davidson pointed out that, in its early days, digital humanities "was largely, though not exclusively, about digitizing and scaling and making 'available' existing archives." She noted that access was conceptualized narrowly as "digitizing existing knowledge so more people could use it." Even with its many innovations, early digital humanities scholars were operating within a mass-media-era broadcast model, focused on honing senders' messages and delivering them to passive receivers. Yet as Davidson pointed out, "once you change access, you open the floodgates to a range of other questions about content, authority, hierarchy, and power that you may not even know you were asking." (Golden 2013)

In this paper, we take up some of the questions that can emerge with the opening of those floodgates. Specifically, we review what members of the Institute for Digital Humanities at the University of Denver learned as we came together to develop various digital humanities projects that were designed to open the floodgates by encouraging collaboration among diverse participants, perspectives, and publics in the construction of knowledge. The Institute brought humanities scholars and scholars in communication and media studies together with experts in interactive media and design to develop tools and to consider the role of those tools in relation to knowledge construction and social change. We wanted to respond to Johanna Drucker's (2009) observation that digital humanities has tended to view communication technologies as a form of transmission or delivery rather than as a form of mediation, particularly because our participants from the fields of communication studies are actively involved in exploring the relationships between modes of communication, mediation, and cultural change. As Drucker notes, "computational methods are not simply a means to an end. They are a powerful change agent setting the terms of a cultural shift." (p. 4) Drawing from our experiences with University of Denver's Institute for Digital Humanities (DUIDH), then, we argue that as digital humanities moves away from a mass-media-era broadcast model to a more networked-focused approach, power dynamics around knowledge production are changing, and these changes significantly influence how we understand culture, history, language and creativity, as well as the very nature of scholarship. In the section that follows, we lay the conceptual groundwork for a more in-depth discussion and evaluation of the institute workshops, projects, and outcomes. We consider digital humanities as both a movement embracing an exciting set of tools and a framework through which to understand how those tools are reshaping the relationships between stakeholders of knowledge and learning. We conclude by offering several key insights developed in relation to institute projects and discussions, and consider what they suggest about the future directions of digital humanities. We begin, however, with a discussion of the digital humanities as our institute understood it.

II. Background

Digital Humanities had its start when, in the mid-1960s, scholars first sought to harness the capabilities of what were then-new computers for the tasks of indexing text. As Hindley (2013) has noted of those early years, "One of the biggest challenges for humanists was the question of how to turn language, the core operating system of the humanities, into numbers in order to be compiled and calculated." Digital humanities has long been about such translation: from language to numbers, and from complex ideas steeped in reason and disciplinary tradition to stories, images, and even poetics that distill and convey meaning for audiences far beyond a single discipline. Digital humanities is perhaps best understood as a framework for thinking about both knowledge construction and about knowledge sharing. It is a framework that undergoes change, and differing modes of communication are key to those changes.

During the broadcast era, knowledge sharing was envisioned largely through the "sage on the stage" model, in which the teacher was the deliverer of content and the student was the recipient. Today, in the era of computer networks, the teacher is viewed as one node in an interconnected system, one who facilitates learning and recognizes that learning occurs not only from teacher to student but also from student to student and between students and the various publics of which they are a part. Digital tools of collaboration have emerged to support a more robust model of networked knowledge sharing. And within this new model, new questions emerge. How does the teacher move from being expert to facilitator? What kinds of infrastructure are needed to support this shift? How do we assess when learning has taken place?

The digital humanities movement has similarly been a useful way for academics to reconceptualize scholarship, moving away from the model of the singular deliverer of expertise to the subject expert who partners and works collaboratively with others. Knowledge is no longer confined to the classroom or the library book, but is made accessible through publicly available archives, websites, and online and mobile-based resources. It is shared and developed broadly among blogs, wikis, listservs, and in other places both online and off. And these new modes of communication have also raised a host of new questions. What kinds of infrastructure (technical, social, legal) are needed to support research in this new era? How might those who have been historically excluded from knowledge production be invited into this collaboration? And what kinds of new questions of public engagement might this approach of inclusion bring to the fore?

Through online collaboration, scholars today can develop new ways of conducting the basic functions of scholarship by dividing labor (whether in making a translation, developing software, or building a digital collection), exchanging and refining ideas (via blogs, wikis, listservs, virtual worlds, etc.), engaging multiple perspectives, and working together to solve complex problems. In addition, with digital tools, scholars can create richly layered "texts" that in turn encourage active engagement on the part of the reader. As Unsworth (1997) described over a decade ago, "instead of establishing a single text, editors can present the whole layered history of composition and dissemination; instead of opening for the reader a single path through a thicket of text, the critic can provide her

with a map and a machete. This is not an abdication of the responsibility to educate or illuminate: on the contrary, it engages the reader, the user, as a third kind of collaborator, a collaborator in the construction of meaning." These new avenues for constructing meaning significantly influence our approaches to understanding the human condition as well as the public's role in knowledge construction in the contemporary digital landscape.

The concept of networks is key to considering how scholars are now placing priority on ways their research might be taken up by participants involved in larger conversations about issues of importance throughout society. Scholars are in essence viewing their work as part of broader scholarly and public networks. We found that in the Institute for Digital Humanities at the University of Denver, we were using the term network in two ways: to refer to the technological infrastructure that supports interconnection, and also to the interconnections themselves. "Networks," of course, are not new. With the rise of electronically based networking technologies -- low cost production tools and ubiquitous avenues of distribution -- networks have become more adaptive, decentralized, and visible than ever before, replacing the once highly regulated channels of communication with flexible systems that hold the potential for widespread participation and collective decision-making, as well as for new mechanisms of control. Ubiquitous networks along with more widely accessible tools for media production have transformed the nature of publics (Varnelis 2008): networks have become the building blocks of society and more broadly the human condition (Castells 2007). Acknowledgement of this is in turn transforming how we approach the humanities.

While networks give more opportunities for traditional power to wield influence and control, they also offer opportunities for new actors to contribute to knowledge as well as to meaning making, identity formation and more. Throughout the course of the 2011-2013 fellowship program, it became clear to us that perhaps the most important and neglected component of digital humanities today is the one that examines and helps shape these new dynamics. After outlining details of the institute, we will return this issue of shifting power dynamics.

III. University of Denver Institute for Digital Humanities (DUIDH)

a. Project activities and accomplishments
The collaborative work of the Institute Fellows took place in three parts -- and independent research and exhibition efforts before, during, and after the time period of the collaborative sessions informed and deepened the joint work of the fellows. These activities and accomplishments are documented on the institute website http://idhdu.com/

The first session with fellows was held over five days in June 2011 at University of Denver's new C3 Studios. In December 2011 fellows and Institute faculty touched base, offering participants the opportunity to share works in progress for feedback and further development. Based on initial discussions about changing notions of the digital humanities, we also collaborated on the creation of a short introductory video that invited fellows to consider the question, "What is (or are) the Digital Humanities?" Eighteen

months later, the final meeting convened all of the Fellows for a two-day conference in September 2012 at the University of Denver's C3 Studios, where fellows shared their work, made more personalized and in-depth videos about their projects in order to disseminate their work, discussed methods and experiences, and developed and organized the publication of an online collection of their methodological reflections. We believe that our Institute's incorporation of video as a mode of communication through which to explore issues of translation and knowledge production became a cornerstone of the Institute's innovations.

In addition to the three key meetings with fellows, throughout the 18-month Institute, the fellows engaged with one another and with Institute mentors using a website created specifically for the Institute. There, fellows experimented with the emerging multimedia skills to vlog, podcast, and blog concerns, queries, updates and comments on each others' work or related work in the field.

Three artists' exhibitions were informed by and coincided with the efforts of the Institute for Digital Humanities. The first was W3Fi, an interactive installation at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art that combines WiFi, the word "we" and the number "3" (in slang digital use, a replacement for the letter "e") and that encouraged participants to consider their digital identities as well as their digital interactions with others. The second, "Men of God, Men of Nature," was an interactive installation at the Denver Art Museum that highlighted the complex but often tacit connections between religion, politics and science. A third exhibit, "Constructs of Acquaintance," was an interactive installation at Denver's Space Gallery that allowed participants to shape a collective experience using cell phones to connect with one another and with a complex lighting system. Fellows were encouraged to participate in each of these as ways to embody and explore experiential forms of knowing and to consider further the questions raised in our collective efforts, including: "What does it mean to be human in a digital age?" "How might we understand the interfaces and modes of communication that both enable and constrain interpersonal and technological networks?" "How do interactions and understandings change as experiences with mediation change?" and "Who is included and excluded from these networks and how might those patterns be better understood through methods of visualization?"

Additionally, using methods of humanistic inquiry in concert with Youth Participatory Action Research, the project co-directors explored these questions through grounded explorations of how young people from disadvantaged backgrounds choose to employ digital means for addressing themselves to issues of concern in their communities, and how some from relatively more privileged backgrounds engaged new digital tools in building bridges between social activism, advocacy efforts, and traditional journalism. Efforts in these areas enabled the co-directors to offer examples for the fellows to consider in discussions of diversity, knowledge construction, networks, and power dynamics and the digital as experienced among populations whose interests, needs, and assumptions often differ from those within university settings.

b. Accomplishments

The central goals of the institute were to increase interdisciplinary collaboration among scholars by helping them develop the skills they need to collaborate with one another and with various publics; and to encourage scholars to create media rich and interactive reports on their research in order to push the boundaries of traditional academic publishing and authorship and extend the reach of collaborative efforts to include members of the public. We consider the work of the fellows to be among our most significant accomplishments.

Fellows' Projects and Publications
Leonardo Flores, Associate Professor of Literature at the University of Puerto Rico, spent 2012-2013 at the University of Bergen (Sweden) as a Digital Culture Fulbright Scholar. As part of his effort during the time of the IDH Fellowship, Flores launched the 500-day (more than 71,000 words) daily performance art postings on electronic literature titled, "I (heart) E-Poetry," which was named 1st runner up in the 2012 Digital Humanities awards and has become the basis for a book that he has proposed to a major university press. During his time as a Fellow, he also published four peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and is working with collaborators on two more. He also made presentations on E-Poetry and data visualization in academic venues around the world, many of which are made available on his blog: http://leonardoflores.net/.

Angel David Nieves, Associate Professor of Africana Studies and co-Director of Hamilton College's Digital Humanities Initiative, worked as part of his Fellowship project with collaborator Marla Jacksh, Assistant Professor at the College of New Jersey, on the development of the "Virtual Freedom Trail Project," which traces the African migration from South Africa to Tanzania during the colonial period liberation movement: http://www.dhinitiative.org/projects/freedomtrail/   During his time as a Fellow Nieves also proposed a THATcamp Victoria 2011 session titled, "Digital Humanities + Social Justice = Does Not Compute?" The conversation that ensued contributed to THATcamp HBCU Historically Black Colleges & Universities), which took place in the summer of 2012. He also presented the lecture, "Digital Scholarship and Learning in the Humanities" at Wellesley College in March 2012.

Siobhan Senier, Associate Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, utilized her time as a Fellow to develop the project, "Writing of Indigenous New England." This project has involved working with members of 12 native (First-nation) tribal communities, finding means for sharing community stories that had been shared in book form and were then made available in video and storytelling. Like the Nieves/Jacksh project, Senier's is influenced by movements within critical ethnic and gender studies, asking the question, "Who counts in Digital Humanities?" The first exhibit was a partnership with local historical societies, basket makers, and the Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum. It focused on Abenaki baskets and asked readers and viewers to consider nonalphabetic forms of literacy as part of indigenous literary traditions. See http://idhdu.com/writing-of-indigenous-new-england/

Jon Winet, Associate Professor and New Media Artist and Nicole Dudley, graduate student in Library and Information Sciences, both at the University of Iowa, worked as

Fellows on the development of the University of Iowa's UNESCO "City of Literature" mobile application. Through their work with the fellowship, they transformed a static source of information into a mobile that enables citizens to contribute their own text, video, and audio commentary from their own devices.

Kathryn Henne, postdoctoral fellow at the Regulatory Institutions Network at the Australian National University; Nina Billone Prieur, Assistant Professor of Theater Studies at Duke University; and Rita Shah, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Elizabethtown College collaborated during their time as fellows on a project entitiled "Re-imagining the Bodies and Boundaries of the Crimino-Legal Complex." Their study problematizes the images and meanings often assumed to constitute the realities of crime, asking not only how do we imagine criminal bodies, but how can we re-imagine them in ways that challenge the conventions of the crimino-legal complex and how might digital formats and interactive tools facilitate this kind of refashioning? Henne and Shah published a paper based on this research in The Critical Criminologist. All three of the collaborators have given several public talks on this project during their tenure as fellows including at the 2011 American Society of Criminology Annual Conference in Washington.

Charles Foy, Assistant Professor at Eastern Illinois University, created the Black Mariner Database ("BMD"), a compilation of more than 24,000 eighteenth century Atlantic black seamen and maritime fugitives with more than fifty different data fields. This database has been used to shed light onto the lives of black seamen; to make the plethora of data available to both scholars and the general public; and to create a platform where scholars can add to the body of information on black mariners. In addition to creating the database, Foy has published several articles based on this project including "Maritime Populations" in Joseph C. Miller, ed., Princeton Companion to Atlantic History.

Fellows Mike Griffith, Instructional Technology Specialist at Tulane University, and Vicki Mayer, Associate Professor at Tulane University worked on their project MediaNola during their time with IDH. MediaNOLA is a research and reference portal that educates scholars, students, and citizens about the origins of this New Orleans culture, the ways it develops from the social networks located across the city's human landscape. The project is online at http://medianola.org/

University of Denver-based fellow Sarah Pessin created a sort of "social justice service announcement" video for the Center for Judaic Studies and Holocaust Awareness Institute that features various University of Denver undergraduate social justice projects, while at the same time highlighting DU's new Holocaust Memorial Social Justice Site, as well as post-Holocaust ethical teachings from philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.

Kirstyn Leuner, Doctoral Candidate in Romantic Era and 19th-Century Literature, spent her time as a Fellow working on the Women Poets of the Romantic Period project, which involved curating an exhibit of rare books in conjunction with the 2012 British Women Writer's Conference and digitizing more than 70 of those books. She also created a video exhibit of the in-house exhibit and presented a paper on the project for HASTAC V titled,

"Metadata and Digital Pedagogy: Surfacing Romantic-Era Book Histories With Captions." She also wrote ten blog posts for various blogs, including HASTAC and the NASSR Grad Student Caucus Blog. See http://idhdu.com/wprp-leuner/

Sheila Schroeder, Associate Professor in Media, Film, and Journalism Studies at the University of Denver, completed a website and footage for her documentary project titled, "Woodstock West," which interviewed one-time campus activists to learn how their participation in campus protests shaped their lives as community members. She also garnered grant support for the completion of this project in the 2012-2013 academic year as a result of the work that she was able to complete as a Fellow.

Susan Meyer, Lecturer in Art and Art History at the University of Denver, utilized her time as a Fellow to develop video expertise for use in developing her exhibition, "Past Utopias." Her work consisted of both documenting locations where utopic societies once met (the Shaker community, the Oneida community) and creating a series of videos utilizing miniature figures layered with real-world environments.

Director and Faculty Mentor Projects and Publications
Several director and faculty mentor projects also met our goals of creating collaborative and media rich reports.

The project Mediatization of Media Activism: New Tools, Ubiquitous Networks, Emergent Voices is a collaboration between institute directors Lynn Schofield Clark and Adrienne Russell and University of Colorado Boulder professors Nabil Echchaibi and Michela Ardizzoni. Each conducted a case study that examines how different media technologies are used in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts to promote a counter-public perspective on social and political issues that are often silenced or distorted in mainstream, traditional media. (For more on each study see http://idhdu.com/mediatization-of-media-activism-new-tools-ubiquitous-networks-emergent-voices/) The studies were published in a special issue of Journalism: Theory, Practice, Criticism entitled "Practicing media activism, shaping networked journalism" edited by Russell. Russell's article was picked up by Harvard site "Journalist's Resource," which is meant to bring cutting-edge research to the attention of journalists. This research was also the topic of several conference presentations and keynote talks by both Russell and Clark on digital media, power shifts and the humanities. Talks by Russell include: "Media Literacies in the Emergent Media Environment," presented at the National Conference on Media Reform, Denver, April 2013; "Ghosts in the News-Media Machine: How digital activists are shaping the future of media," a keynote presentation at University of Indiana's Media@IU Inaugural Conference, November 2012. Talks by Clark include: "Social Networks and Social Media Use among Young People and Families," for the Workshop on the Well-Being and Safety of Young Adults, National Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences; "Does social class make a difference? Digital and mobile media use among U.S. families," presentation to the Association of Internet Researchers, University of Salford, U.K., "Digital storytelling: anchoring narratives and identity," presentation to the semi-annual International Conference on Media, Religion, and Culture, Eskeshehir, Turkey; "The

mediatization of media activism among youth: Exploring critical service learning in journalism education," Presentation to the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Phoenix, Arizona. Clark was also a contributor to a curated online discussion. Her contribution was titled, "Using media to make a difference," in In Media Res: A Media Commons Project. Available online: http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2013/04/16/using-media-make-difference This effort described some of her work in exploring processes of mediation and efforts to empower young people to use media as they seek to make a difference in their own diverse communities.

Scott Howard researched, wrote, and published a peer-reviewed article, "WYSIWYG Poetics: Reconfiguring the Fields for Creative Writers & Scholars," in The Journal of Electronic Publishing 14.2 (December, 2011) (http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0014.204) drawing on his work with the institute. He presented the paper at the Reconfiguring Authorship conference, Ghent University, Belgium (November, 2012): (http://twubs.com/RA12) with support from IDHDU.

Chris Coleman and Laleh Mehran, as mentioned above, create exhibits that demonstrated the ways digital visualization can be used to critique and engage our changing cultural and social landscapes. For more on their work see their websites http://lalehmehran.com/ and http://www.digitalcoleman.com/

Website
In addition to the three meetings, throughout the eighteen-month institute, fellows engaged with one another and with institute mentors using website/social networking platform created specifically for the institute that supported engagement among institute faculty and fellows. This space providing a space where fellows can experiment with the emerging multimedia skills to vlog, podcast, and blog concerns, queries, updates and comments on each others' work or related work in the field. The space ultimately served as a place to exhibit projects and videos of fellows describing their work.

Evidence of the University of Denver's deepened commitment to the digital humanities
The first years of the Institute for Digital Humanities deepened and solidified intellectual relationships among University of Denver faculty members who had been variously affiliated with the university's programs in Digital Media Studies and Electronic Media and Arts. As core faculty within these programs continued to collaborate, a new structure within the university was born, and these two programs were combined to constitute the Emergent Digital Practices program. This effort tightened linkages between the arts, social sciences, and digital humanities and enabled colleagues to expand courses and degree offerings, so that in addition to a B.A. and M.A., the program now offers a BFA and an MFA degree and has solidified its commitment to the digital humanities through this endeavor.

Additionally, the University has recognized the value of collaboration among its arts, humanities, and social science faculty, particularly in relation to the emphasis on public good and communication that is embodied within the University's Media, Film, and

Journalism Studies program. The University's Office of Institutional Advancement has announced its plans to prioritize fund raising for a new building to be termed "The Hub," which will be a location that hosts new interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary efforts as well as the Media, Film, and Journalism Studies department, and also provides access to technological expertise and equipment.

During the time period of the NEH funding for the Institute for the Digital Humanities, the University also completed a renovation of its library facilities, which are now housed within the Anderson Academic Commons. In addition to its work in archiving, curating, collection management and technology services, the Commons is now home to several dynamic campus institutions that specifically promote digital media in teaching and in scholarship. The Office of Teaching and Learning provides support primarily for the incorporation of technology into classroom applications, and the Center for Media Technology and Video Production offers support for individual students, faculty, and staff members as they complete projects of digital storytelling, data visualization, and video essay production.

c. Audience
As indicated in the above descriptions, audiences for the institute projects are diverse, ranging from scholars across disciplines and campuses, publics, as well as media professionals, artists, educators and more. Indeed one of the most common themes that run across projects is that of engaging a diversity of publics not necessarily as "audiences" but rather as collaborators. For example, several of the projects were based on collaboration with the communities they were studying, including "Writing of Indigenous New England" and the Virtual Freedom Trail Project (VFTP): Corridors to the Past and Present; Iowa UNESCO City of Literature Mobile App; and Woodstock West. Others like Mapping Meta-Culture, Eighteenth Century Atlantic Black Mariner Database ("BMD"); MediaNola; and Mediatization of Media Activism were meant to encourage collaborations and exchange across disciplinary and professional lines. Several projects were aimed at bringing scholarship to the public, including Social Justice Service Announcement; Writing of Indigenous New England.

d. Evaluation
Projects: The institute participants had eighteen months to envision, execute, document and communicate their research. We measured success of each project' innovation, collaboration, and engagement with the public based on various criteria including: a) Was the project executed using a new tools and methods in the process of production, collaboration, presentation and dissemination of research? b) Were new tools used to engage the public to inform the research process? c) Were the outcomes of research presented in order to ensure the widest reach and relevance across humanities disciplines and out into the public? d) Do the new tools simply replicate old methods of research or do they provide something new? Although it is difficult to measure the qualities of innovation and public engagement, we feel this set of criteria not only allowed us to gauge the success of the projects in relation to intended impact but also helped contribute to defining what these qualities mean in the context of humanities scholarship.

Project evaluations took place on an ongoing basis throughout the eighteen-month institute. Fellows were asked to turn in updates, post to the website, check in with the faculty mentors. Because of this all of the projects were a success in that they enabled scholars to gain new skills and achieve new dimensions to their work. The majority also achieved the specific aims they set in their proposals.

Evaluation by institute fellows
We asked fellows to fill out online surveys with mostly open-ended questions in order to gain feedback after each face-to-face workshops. The fellows expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the hands-on workshops that afforded the development of technological expertise. We found that because of the small size of the workshops, the leaders were able to personalize the curriculum according to the needs and proficiencies of each fellow. Overall fellows reported their experience with IDH was extremely productive and institute faculty was supportive and knowledgeable.   Some expressed the need for more help with the project planning stage of their work than we had originally anticipated. We will take this into consideration when planning future workshops.

IV. Future Directions in Digital Humanities at DU and beyond

(e-g) Continuation/Long term/Funding
One of the central goals of the institute was to develop a more nuanced understanding of the development of theoretical models to better understand the role of digital and visual media in changing literacies of what it means to be human. We continue to collaborate with local digital humanities scholars, including on two specific projects. We are establishing a Center for Media Justice within the institute with the help of two local fellows and Colorado University scholars, Nabil Echchaibi and Michela Ardizzoni. The center will work to bring together media makers, publics, and digital humanities scholars to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects and to work toward developing a more nuanced understanding of the emergent media environment and in turn making the media environment more equitable. DUIDH has also been invited to help build a regional network of digital humanities scholars together with scholars from Colorado University's new interdisciplinary school of information, communication, journalism, media and technology. We believe these relationships and ongoing dialogue are one of the most valuable outcomes of DUIDH. We are currently in the process of seeking funding for both of the above-mentioned projects and we plan on re-applying for NEH funds to support the institute and to involve national fellows in our work.

V. Conclusion

From the Black Mariner project's aggregated information on a nearly lost part of history to Media NOLAs' social networks that constitute contemporary New Orleans, all of the projects associated with the institute, in some way demonstrate shifts in how knowledge is produced and circulated. Throughout the course of the institute, DUIDH fellows and faculty identified a set of overarching questions and issues related to these shifts that are key to ongoing investigations related to understanding and shaping Digital Humanities.

How do we move beyond enriching culture, to changing it to be more equitable?
One re-occurring theme that surfaced in the projects and conversations generated throughout the institute was the enduring homogeneity of digital humanities. The celebratory rhetoric around the potential of new tools to create more inclusivity has not become a widespread reality. The need to make access to information more equitable must become a central concern if digital humanities scholars are to succeed in enhancing the quality and impact of our work through public engagement. The reality that access to and competence with digital media tools and networks is still extremely limited for some people, often the same people whose input would most benefit our work, is overlooked in the digital humanities, especially among those who see digital tools as a way of enriching their scholarship and culture more generally rather than an avenue to work toward making things more equitable. The mostly neglected challenge that remains close to the heart of digital humanities is the need to generally increase media competence -- critical understandings of how media power works, the skills to kludge together technologies to create new media tools, the know-how to leverage convergent media to tell transmedia stories, and experience at reworking existing media practices. Without more widespread adoption of these skills among scholars, non-digital scholars will be limited in terms of who their work can reach and what conversations they will contribute to, and if media competence among members of the public does not become more widespread, the opportunity to create more inclusiveness and equality through our scholarship will be precluded. When we do open knowledge production processes to various publics, we as educators find that our own perspectives are changed. We also learn that the questions and the frameworks for thinking through those questions are changed, because they begin with starting points that we could not have anticipated.

What are the new forces that have influence in the hierarchy of culture?
Clearly in the current environment the power of professional tastemakers like academics is being supplanted not only by publics but also by the mostly commercially driven tools and architecture that shape this new environment. Google, for example, has introduced new ways of aggregating models of authority and popularity. What is the nature of the influence Google has on culture when it becomes the primary mode of ranking and aggregating cultural products? How can understanding the relationship between Google and culture help us make things more equitable? Digital humanities scholars must consider ways stakeholders within the media industries play an unintentional yet powerful role in structuring and maintaining existing societal arrangements of power, both through existing social relations as well as through the emergent organizational authority of codes, networks, and protocols.

Media is now central to study of humanity and critically engaging with digital media is a key and under explored facet of both media studies and digital humanities. Critiquing the media environment -- the tools, platforms, stakeholders, practices -- is essential to the processes of understanding and integrating digital tools into our work. It is not surprising then that these sorts of critiques were some of the most dynamic elements of the Institute projects. It is with these ideas that we shape future of the institute and its education and scholarly goals.

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